

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8429

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

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TAGS: PFOR, CH, UR

SUBJECT: SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS: NEGATIVE TASS COMMENTARY

1. SUMMARY. IN MOSCOW'S FIRST AUTHORITATIVE COMMENT ON CHINA SINCE THE RELEASE OF THE SOVIET HELICOPTER CREW, A TASS OBSERVER DNOUNCES PEKING'S ANTI-SOVIET PROPAGANDA AND CHARGES THAT PEKING HAS IGNORED MOSCOW'S EFFORTS TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS. THE ITEM DOES NOT MENTION THE CREW'S RELEASE. END SUMMARY.

2. PRAVDA (JAN 6) CARRIES AN ARTICLE BY TASS POLITICAL OBSERVER M. YAKOVLEV CALLED "NEW YEAR'S PEKING STYLE" WHICH COMMENTS NEGATIVELY ON THE JOINT NEW YEAR'S EDITORIAL IN THE THREE CENTRAL PRC PUBLICATIONS.

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YAKOVLEV'S ARTICLE WAS ALSO CARRIED IN KRASNAYA

ZVEZDA AND EXCERPTS WERE READ ON THE NATION-WIDE
EVENING TV NEWS ON JANUARY 5.

3. ACCORDING TO YAKOVLEV, THE PRC EDITORIAL CALLS
FOR OPPOSITION TO ANY DEVIATION FROM MAOIST DOMESTIC
POLICY OR "THE ANTI-SOVIET COURSE OF THE MAO TSE-TUNG
GROUP IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA." YAKOVLEV DISPARAGES
THE EDITORIAL'S UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS TO DOMESTIC
"SUCCESES" AND ITS THESIS ON THE NEED "TO PREPARE
FOR WAR." IN THIS REGARD, PRAVDA CITES THOSE PORTIONS
OF THE TWO NEWLY-PUBLISHED MAO POEMS WHICH DESCRIBE
THE WORLD "TURNED UPSIDE DOWN" WITH "THE SKY ABLAZE
WITH GUNFIRE AND THE EARTH POCKMARKED WITH SHELLS."
YAKOVLEV SAYS THAT THE EDITORIAL'S ANTI-SOVIET CHARGES,
COUPLED WITH ITS FAILURE TO MENTION IMPERIALISM, SHOWS
THAT THE MAOISTS ARE SHARING THE SAME PLATFORM WITH
IMPERIALISM AND REACTION. THE EDITORIAL, "FLOUTING
THE OBVIOUS FACT," CHARGES MOSCOW WITH HAVING CAUSED
SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS TO DETERIORATE AND IGNORES
SOVIET STATEMENTS AND "NUMEROUS CONCRETE PROPOSALS"
TO IMPROVE RELATIONS, SAYS YAKOVLEV. THE CURRENT
ROUND OF "ANTI-SOVIET HYSTERIA," HE CONCLUDES, "IS
INTENDED TO CREATE NEW OBSTACLES IN THE WAY OF
NORMALIZING SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS.

4. COMMENT: AS THE FIRST AUTHORITATIVE SOVIET COMMENT
FOLLOWING THE RELEASE OF THE HELICOPTER CREW,
YAKOVLEV'S ARTICLE DOES NOT HINT AT ANY SOFTENING OF
MOSCOW'S LINE. ON THE CONTRARY, IT DOES NOT MENTION
THAT EVENT AND SEEMS TO SAY THAT MOSCOW IS STILL
WAITING TO HEAR IT ECHOED IN PEKING'S PROPAGANDA. BUT BY
SOVIET STANDARDS THE ARTICLE IS NOT STRIDENT,
IMPLYING PERHAPS THAT MOSCOW IS STILL ON THE DEFENSIVE
AND HAS NOT YET WORKED OUT HOW TO RESPOND TO THE CHINESE
MOVE. IN THIS MANNER IT MAY LEAVE THE DOOR SOMEWHAT AJAR
FOR POSSIBLE FURTHER SOVIET RESPONSES.

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